

**TULARE COUNTY WATER COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**April 15, 2013**

**Members Present:**

Allen Ishida, Board Representative and Chairman  
Richard L. Schafer, District 5 Appointee  
Paul Boyer, District 1 Appointee  
Susana De Anda, At-Large Appointee  
Rudy Mendoza, TCAG Representative  
Keith Watkins, At-Large Appointee

**Members Absent:**

Dennis Keller, At-Large Appointee  
Mark Larsen, District 3 Appointee  
Mike Ennis, Board Alternate Representative  
Chris Kapheim, District 4 Appointee  
Dale Brogan, District 2 Appointee

**Staff Present:**

Julieta Martinez, Tulare County Board of Supervisors  
Denise Akins, County Administrative Office  
Arlene Silva, County Counsel  
Barbara Grunwell, County Counsel  
Jake Raper, RMA

**Members of the Public who voluntarily provided their names on the attendance sheet:**

Carole Clum  
Pat Pinkham  
Michael Hickey  
Shane Smith  
Michael Tharp  
Richard Garcia  
Beverly Garcia  
Niki Woodard  
Kathy Wood  
Carole Combs

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 3:03pm.

**2. Public Comment Period**

Carol Clum of Three Rivers provided the Commissioners with two handouts. The first handout was from NRDC's "OneEarth" magazine. The second handout was from the Financial Times of January 28, 2013. See attachment for comments.

Michael Hickey of the Resource Management Agency distributed a handout of well locations that have water quality data available. Discussion followed.

3. Approval of Minutes from February 11, 2013 meeting  
Approval of Minutes from March 11, 2013 meeting

Commissioner Boyer provided a handout with amendments to the February 11, 2013 minutes. Motion to approve the February 11<sup>th</sup> minutes was made by Commissioner Boyer, Second by Commissioner Watkins, Motion Approved. Commissioner De Anda abstained due to absence on that day.

Motion to approve the March 11<sup>th</sup> minutes made by Commissioner Boyer, Second by Commissioner Schafer, Motion Approved. Commissioner Mendoza abstained due to absence on that day.

4. Presentation on the Tulare Basin Watershed Initiative by Niki Woodard and Kathy Wood of the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners

Kathy Wood with the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners (TBWP) began the presentation by discussing integrating land and water solutions. The goal is to promote ecological and economic health, sustain agricultural heritage, and enhance quality with time in the Tulare Basin. She stated that there is a Conservation Vision which really talks about how they are working with integrated resource management. They aim to preserve our natural heritage and improve the quality of life for those in the Tulare Basin. Kathy mentioned that TBWP was awarded a \$300,000 grant from the Department of Conservation Statewide Watershed Coordinator Program in February 2011 to lead the Tulare Basin Watershed Initiative. The goal is to create healthy regional watersheds with ecologically functional waterways, wetlands and uplands that provided abundant clean water for both people and wildlife.

Niki Woodard of the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners also spoke in regards to specific accomplishments. First was the development of the website, [tularebasinwatershed.org](http://tularebasinwatershed.org). The website has the latest news and they are regularly updating content and always looking for contributions. TBWF would like for this to be more of a team effort. Another reason for the website was to help attract funding to the region. Project planning is another goal with a project database in the works. TBWF wants to showcase projects happening in the Tulare basin for funders. She commented on another accomplishment that has been the work in the disadvantage communities in the southwest part of the County primarily in Alpaugh and Allensworth.

Kathy Wood commented on a couple of projects that had great success in integration. One example was the Pixley Conservation Project. She stated they also worked with the Southern Sierra with their first successful planning grant application to the Department of Water Resources. It is all about connecting the upper and lower watershed. Another local effort of the TBWP in is the White River flooding of the Allensworth Ecologic Reserve and surrounding communities.

Niki shared that the next Tulare Basin working group meeting is coming up on May 2<sup>nd</sup> and invited all Commissioners to attend.

Commissioner Boyer commented on the White River flooding and shared that he was glad the Tulare Lake Basing Watershed was looking into that issue.

Kathy stated that working for a government non-profit organization provides the ability to be more creative and to come up with more ideas with the exception that there are many constraints.

Commissioner Schafer asked if the title of acquired lands is in the name of a non-profit.

Kathy Wood commented when they do acquire lands, they work with land trusts such as the Sequoia Riverland Trusts but in many cases, they are not acquiring the lands. TLWP will help with information for the application for grants.

Chairman Ishida stated that one of the existing problems is the fact that the Bureau is involved. Funds get hung up at the Bureau and nothing happens because our projects are small and may not always get full attention. He asked Denise Akins to check the status of grant funds given to the County.

Commissioner De Anda asked the amount of funding for the White River Flood Management Project.

Kathy Wood stated that they are asking for \$500,000.

#### 5. Update on Tulare Lake Basin Disadvantage Community Water Study

Denise Akins gave an update. The first report of the four pilot projects has been produced. The first report is the non-infrastructure management. The first pilot project stakeholder meeting will be tomorrow Monday, April 16<sup>th</sup> from 3-5pm. There will be an update on the pilot projects as well specific detail of the first pilot project.

Commissioner De Anda added that for each of the pilots there will be a stakeholder technical review stakeholder group. The two next pilot drafts will be released fairly soon.

#### 6. Subcommittee Reports

Commissioner Schafer shared that the Sacramento District Court provided a tentative ruling with respect to the adequacy of the CEQA documentation of the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program and certification thereof by the Regional Water Quality Control Board. The court said it was inadequate and that it should be re-constructed. The court also stated the existing waiver for the irrigated lands regulatory program would remain in place until they have worked through an adequate EIR for the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. He stated we are not sure how long this will delay the groundwater component of the new general order but it is encouraging that after two years of telling the board that they failed to perform adequate CEQA documentation the Board has now said it will be redone. The tentative decision is 22 pages and available for download.

Commissioner Mendoza asked that staff email him the link.

#### 7. Staff Reports

Denise Akins shared some updates in regards to legislation. AB 69 moved today and is going to the Senate. It was authored by Perea and establishes a nitrate at risk area fund under the state Water Resources Control Board. It is subject to appropriation by the legislature. It is unclear at this time where the money will come from. Assembly Bill 21, which is co-authored by Perea, establishes a safe drinking water small community emergency grant fund which will be funded through a charge in lieu of interest in safe drinking water state revolving fund loans. AB 30 has a similar charge of interest to augment the state water pollution control revolving fund for small community grant funds. It is anticipated to give the program a seven million dollar boost.

#### 8. Commissioners Comments

Commissioner Boyer posed a question on the status of the last meeting discussion on water projects and understood some persons went to Washington recently. He asked if there was any updates.

Commissioner Mendoza said many programs are on the table and there is very little information at this point.

Commissioner Ishida stated that Success Lake was discussed when in Washington, D.C. He also announced, County Counsel Arlene Silva will be leaving the County for San Jose. He thanked her for her time served on the Commission.

Commissioner Mendoza announced that the City of Woodlake will be hosting the League of Cities Dinner. There will be a Regional League of Cities Reception with Senator Fuller and possibly Assemblywoman Conway in attendance.

9. Next meeting – Monday, May 13, 2013, 3:00 p.m. – Board of Supervisors Chambers

10. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:54pm.

Carole Clum's Public Comments to the Tulare County  
Water Commission April 15, 2013

Your first handout from NRDC's "Onearth" magazine describes a way to remove phosphorus and nitrogen with algae-coated screens in waterways. The phosphorus and nitrogen harvested from the screens makes a fine fertilizer that degrades as plants grow, so it doesn't leach nutrients into the groundwater at the same rate as conventional fertilizer. Water near algae-fertilized cropland stays cleaner.

The second handout from the Financial Times of January 28, 2013, shows dramatically how much greenhouse gas is emitted by gas flaring during oil drilling in North Dakota. Because gas prices are low, it is uneconomical to capture the unwanted gas and pipe it to a power plant. The lights of gas burning in the Bakken oil field in North Dakota and the Eagle Ford field in Texas can be seen in night-time satellite photos. Texas issued almost 2000 permits to flare in 2012. The state should have offered monetary incentives to capture the gas. California is on the precipice of a shale drilling boom.

The third handout from the San Francisco Chronicle of Feb. 15, 2013 lays out the consequences of widespread fracking in California. Fracking uses millions of gallons of clean water and "produces" millions of gallons of toxic wastewater that is difficult to dispose of safely. Wells are being fracked near the Sacramento River, the largest tributary to the San Francisco Bay Delta estuary and a primary water source for

millions of Californians. If fracking expands across California, competition for water will become fiercer and the oil and gas industry will easily outbid farmers for it. This and the risk of water pollution, is a serious threat to California's thriving agriculture industry. Increased fracking of the Monterey Shale would have a severe impact on the San Joaquin Valley which already has some of the nation's worst air quality.

The fourth handout from the High Country News February 4, 2013 issue explains that the Natural Resources Conservation Service is using a new, drier standard for measuring average snowfall.

Baseline averages are computed on the previous three decades. The Seventies were wet. They are no longer included. The 2000s were dry. The new standard obscures the urgent need to adapt to decreasing annual snowpack water content.